This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claims 1-16 (Previously canceled).

Claim 17 (Currently amended): A tool assembly comprising:

a pair of jaws including a first jaw and a second jaw, each of the jaws having a proximal end and a distal end, the first and second jaws being movable in relation to the other ~~in response to an actuating stroke;~~

first and second cam followers supported on the first jaw; and

an approximation member including at least one cam surface positioned to engage the first and second cam followers, the approximation member being movable through an actuating stroke to move the at least one cam surface in relation to the first and second cam followers;

wherein the approximation member is movable to move the at least one cam surface in relation to the first and second cam followers to effect movement of the first jaw to approximate a distal end of the first jaw with the second jaw in a first portion of the actuating stroke, to move the distal end of the first jaw away from the second jaw in a second portion of the actuating stroke, and to bring together the first jaw and the second jaw in substantially parallel closure in a third portion of the actuating stroke.

Claim 18 (Previously presented): A tool assembly according to claim 17, wherein the first jaw includes an anvil and the second jaw includes a cartridge assembly, the cartridge assembly housing a plurality of staples.

Claim 19 (Previously presented): A tool assembly according to claim 17, wherein the at least one cam surface includes at least one cam channel.

Claim 20 (Previously presented): A tool assembly according to claim 19, wherein the at least one cam channel includes first and second cam channels.

Claim 21 (Previously presented): A tool assembly according to claim 17, wherein the approximation member includes a flat plate having the at least one cam surface formed therein.

Claim 22 (Previously presented): A tool assembly according to claim 21, wherein the first jaw includes a longitudinal slot formed in its proximal end, the approximation member being slidably positioned in the longitudinal slot.

Claim 23 (Previously presented): A tool assembly according to claim 22, wherein the first and second cam followers are supported on the proximal end of the first jaw and extend across the longitudinal slot adjacent the at least one cam surface.

Claim 24 (Previously presented): A tool assembly according to claim 23, wherein the at least one cam surface includes first and second cam channels, the first cam follower extending

through the first cam channel and the second cam follower extending through the second cam channel.

Claim 25 (Previously presented): A tool assembly according to claim 17, further including a body portion, wherein the tool assembly is pivotally attached to the body portion by an articulation joint.

Claim 26 (Previously amended): A tool assembly according to claim 25, wherein the body portion forms a distal end of a surgical stapling device.

Claim 27 (Previously presented): A tool assembly according to claim 17, wherein the body portion forms the proximal portion of a disposable loading unit.

Claim 28-36 (Canceled).

Claim 37 (Previously presented): A tool assembly according to claim 17, wherein the first jaw is an anvil and the second jaw is a cartridge assembly housing including a plurality of staples.

Claim 38 (Withdrawn): A tool assembly according to claim 37, further comprising:

a body portion, wherein the tool assembly is pivotally attached to the body portion by an articulation joint;

a dynamic clamping member being movable in relation to the anvil and the cartridge assembly to eject the staples from the cartridge assembly; and

an articulation and firing actuator extending at least partially through the body portion and the tool assembly, the articulation and firing actuator being operably associated with the dynamic clamping member and the tool assembly and being movable in relation thereto to selectively pivot the tool assembly in relation to the body portion and move the dynamic clamping member in relation to the tool assembly to effect ejection of the staples from the cartridge.

Claim 39 (Withdrawn): A tool assembly according to claim 38, wherein the articulation and firing actuator includes a flexible band having a first end portion extending at least partially through the body portion and through the cartridge assembly, a central portion extending from the first end portion and being operatively associated with the dynamic clamping member and a second end portion extending from the central portion through the cartridge assembly and at least partially through the body portion to a position adjacent the first end.

Claim 40 (Withdrawn): A tool assembly according to claim 39, wherein actuation of the first end portion articulates the tool assembly in one direction and actuation of the second end portion articulates the tool assembly in an opposite direction.